

**“MAKE A NOTE OF IT”**



**Lengel Vocational Services**

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## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### *ABOUT THIS WORKSHOP*

The old expression “no job is ever complete until the paperwork is finished” has never been more true than it is with case management. Case managers work hard to help customers, but if they do not write good case notes, the value of their work can be lost.

This workshop goes to the basics of writing good case notes. Participants will review the purpose of case notes, discuss what should be included, and learn how to write a clear and concise case note. It is a good primer for new case managers and a great refresher for veteran case managers alike.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES:*

Participants in this program will have the following opportunities:

- To review the basics of case management records.
- To discuss key principles of record keeping and how case records may be used.
- To understand the keys to making good decisions about case notes and case records.
- To have a useful structure for writing clear and concise case notes.
- To practice good case notes by reviewing written case notes and identifying problems with them.

## **MAKE A NOTE OF IT FORM A**

### *BACK TO BASICS*

GENERAL. In order to be able to keep good case records, case managers must have a good foundation and must also understand the function of case records. This form provides an overview.

### **FOUNDATION AND FUNCTIONS**

1. Record keeping is one of the three essential components of case management (case review, case documentation, and customer participation).
2. Records are used for a variety of reasons.
  - To document and retain information about the customer.
  - To document and retain information about progress towards goals.
  - To document and retain information about services customers receive.
3. Individual records (case files) are used for a variety of purposes.
  - To plan the services a customer will receive.
  - To implement customer services.
  - To evaluate the effectiveness of the services a customer receives.
4. Record keeping is both a helping and an administrative function. Records are a focal point for accountability:
  - To the customer/client.
  - To the local area.
  - To other helping agencies (partners).
5. Case notes/records must be:
  - Clear.
  - Relevant.
  - Useful.

### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

1. Record keeping is a learned skill. It includes important professional judgments.
2. Good record keeping involves a complex series of decisions.
  - Choices about state/local policy and specific information for each case record/file/note.
  - Choices are not always clear.
  - Case managers must compare costs and benefits.
  - Administrators must balance different principles (confidentiality and accountability).
3. Good record keeping requires different skills:
  - Basic writing skills (spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure)
  - Explicit Standards and Procedures
  - Organizational Support (administrative support, time, and equipment).
  - Encouragement and Development.

## **MAKE A NOTE OF IT FORM B**

### *KEEPING GOOD RECORDS*

GENERAL. Case managers should understand the basic principles behind the records they keep. They should also understand the different ways in which the records they keep may be used later. This form provides a brief discussion of those topics.

#### **PRINCIPLES OF RECORD KEEPING**

1. There is no single best style of record keeping. There are actually a variety of acceptable types of styles available for making case notes and maintaining case records.
2. Different styles are selected to highlight the special nature of each customer service transaction.
3. In general, good record keeping (regardless of style) must address and adhere to the following:
  - a. Focus – case notes/records should individualize differentiate the:
    - The person (customer).
    - The needs (of the customer).
    - The situation (the customer is facing).
    - The type(s) of services offered (to the customer).
  - b. Scope – case notes/records seek to link goals, plans, and objectives to:
    - The assessment (problems, barriers, and assets).
    - The resources (availability and access).
  - c. Purpose – case notes/records seek to demonstrate how delivery of services is tied to a change orientation (from unemployment to full employment).
  - d. Functions – case notes/records seek to:
    - Document a process.
      - Review (the customer and his/her situation).
      - Select (appropriate items to include in the record).
      - Analyze (carefully consider and discuss selected items).
      - Organize (present them in a way that other helping professionals would recognize and be able to understand).
    - Develop a product (tell the customer's story).

## **MAKE A NOTE OF IT FORM C**

### *MAKING DECISIONS*

GENERAL. Decision making is an important part of record keeping for case managers. Case managers continually encounter decisions and must have a basis for making good decisions about case notes and case records. This form provides discusses decision making.

### DIVERSITY AND DECISIONS

1. We serve a diverse population and case records/notes must be different/diverse.
2. If all the case notes look and read the same, then there is probably not anything of substance in the case records.
3. Because of the need for differentiation in case notes (customers are different so their records and histories will be different), case managers will face a series of choices when developing case records/notes.

### KEY CHOICES

1. Most choices that case managers make will center around:
  - a. Selecting items to be included in the case records/notes.
  - b. Deciding how to organize and present the case notes.
2. The choices you make as a case manager will impact the quality of your case notes.

### THE PRIMARY FACTOR

1. The single biggest factor in making decision about case notes/records should always be the AUDIENCE.
  - a. Who is most likely to read this record?
  - b. Who else might read it?
  - c. Who am I writing this case note for?
  - d. Will the note(s) make sense to that person/group?
  - e. Will the note(s) be relevant to that person/group?
  - f. Will the case record answer all the main questions they might have?
2. Always consider your audience when making a decision about what to include in a case record and how to document it.

## MAKE A NOTE OF IT FORM D

### *USING STRUCTURE*

GENERAL. Systems and structures can be a valuable resource for case managers. While there is no single universally accepted structure for case notes, if the case manager adopts a personal system/structure, the case manager will benefit in the long run by being able to generate comprehensive case notes easily and consistently. This form provides discusses a good case note structure.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF STRUCTURE

1. Having structure accomplishes three things:
  - a. Requires the case manager to assume more responsibility for case records/notes.
  - b. Encourages the case manager to better organize and plan.
  - c. Emphasizes the purpose of the interview/intervention.
2. This structure proposed in this section is just a road map. It is not a new requirement.
  - a. Learn this structure.
  - b. Use it.
  - c. Deviate from it to meet your needs ... but do not deviate before you have learned how to use it.

### “BRO CRIP”

1. **Background** – the situation, context, setting, conditions, circumstances, and framework around which the interview was scheduled.
2. **Reason** – the purpose, function, rationale, or intended usefulness of the interview.
3. **Observations** – the situation, particularly related to the person of the customer, during the time of the meeting.
4. **Content** – the substance of the meeting or a summary of the key events of the interview.
5. **Results** – the outcome of the meeting or an evaluation of how well the meeting went, particularly in relation to the intended purpose of the meeting.
6. **Impressions** – an overall assessment of the customer and his/her progress towards achieving goals.
7. **Plans** – the next steps, including assignments given to the customer and documentation of when you will meet again.

## MAKE A NOTE OF IT FORM E

### *COMMON GRAMMATICAL MISTAKES*

GENERAL. Below is a list of some of the five common mistakes made in writing. Read the information about each mistake, the example following it, and the problem associated with understanding the sentence. Then write a new sentence that would be more correct.

#### MISTAKE #1: DANGLING MODIFIER

- Explanation – a modifying word that is not properly matched with the word it modifies. They most often occur at the very beginning of a sentence.
- Example – “Traveling north, the trees get smaller.”
- Problem – the sentence is intended to describe a person who travels, but instead, it actually describes trees. Of course, the trees are not traveling, so the sentence is not correct.
- Solution – “Traveling north, I noticed that the trees get smaller.”

#### MISTAKE #2: SQUINTING MODIFIER

- Explanation – a modifier that is placed ambiguously (unclearly) in a sentence so you cannot be sure what word it is modifying.
- Example – “People who travel in Europe often prefer small hotels.”
- Problem – It could mean, “People who often travel in Europe prefer small hotels.” It could also mean, “Often, people who travel in Europe prefer small hotels.”
- Solution – Select either sentence above.

#### MISTAKE #3: CONFUSED PRONOUN

- Explanation – pronouns that refer back to a noun (antecedent) that is not clear.
- Example – “Joe called a neighbor to ask about his car.”
- Problem – Joe could be calling about his own car or the neighbor’s car.
- Solution – “Joe called a neighbor to ask about the neighbor’s car.”

#### MISTAKE #4: SPLIT INFINITIVE

- Explanation – an infinitive is a part of speech that begins with “to” and include a verb. Whenever possible, no other words should go between the word “to” and the verb in the infinitive.
- Example – “He decided to boldly go where no man had gone before.”
- Problem – in some sentences, this could cause confusion.
- Solution – “He decided to go boldly where no man had gone before.”

#### MISTAKE #5: DOUBLE NEGATIVES

- Explanation – in the same sentence or phrase, two negatives are confusing.
- Example – “He hadn’t hardly even begun when he quit.”
- Problem – is confusing. In some case, two negatives can create a positive.
- Solution – “He had hardly even begun when he quit.”

## MAKE A NOTE OF IT FORM F

### *PRACTICUM*

GENERAL. Below is a sample of a case note. You will be asked to work together in your small groups to analyze it. You should try to accomplish two tasks. First, identify some of the problems associated with the case note. Second, make some suggestions that would improve the case note.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
09/25/2003	Shanika is a 16 year old youth currently enrolled in the local school district. She no longer attends school the local high school and has been dropped by the alternative school also. Shanika is undisciplined. She has not paid good attention in any of our sessions together. Her mother thinks she has a learning disability. We will follow up on this question.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS CASE NOTE. In the space below, document some of the problems that you think are associated with this case note, as it is currently written.

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A BETTER CASE NOTE. In the space below, write a better case note.

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## MAKE A NOTE OF IT FORM G

### *ABOUT US*

**YOUR FACILITATOR.** Frank brings the unusual perspective of three decades of professional cartooning to the workforce development business. His cartoons have been syndicated in newspapers across America and have appeared in most major on the newsstand. has also contributed gags and story lines for one of America's most longest running and most beloved comicstrips.



To Frank, all problems are opportunities, and all solutions are processes. Frank has the special ability to see unusual relationships in everyday situations. Not only has this special talent made him a popular cartoonist, but it has also put make him in demand as a trainer, consultant, and retreat facilitator.

**LENGEL VOCATIONAL SERVICES.** Lengel Vocational Services has been around since 1989. Our customers and clients include both workforce development organizations and large, international corporations. The Lengel team pioneered secret shopping for America's one-stops and created the "Genius Factor" as a way to help case managers and youth workers inspire customers to succeed with their employment goals.

**OTHER POPULAR PROGRAMS.** Below are some of our recent, popular programs:

- "Partner Retreats for Case Managers" – Break free from the normal routine while you solve problems together and learn valuable lessons. For the Partner Retreat, case managers go off site to a nearby resort for one or two days and work together in a free flowing, facilitated environment. During the retreat, they forge new relationships and build strong teams as they accomplish assigned goals, such as identifying the scope, content, and structure for case notes in the local area. When they return, case managers are energized and ready to serve their customers better than ever. If you haven't participated in a case manager's retreat recently, now may be the perfect time to plan a "Partner Retreat" in your area!
- "Eight Essential Skills" – You won't want to miss this special program! Most case managers say it is the most fun workshop of the year. Learn eight skills that make a real difference in your effectiveness as a case manager. Practice these skills during the day, enjoying a hilarious environment while doing it! If you schedule this training, be sure to bring a camera because you're going to see things you won't want to forget! We guarantee you'll learn ... and we guarantee you'll have lots of fun too!!!

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Use the information below to contact the Lengel team:

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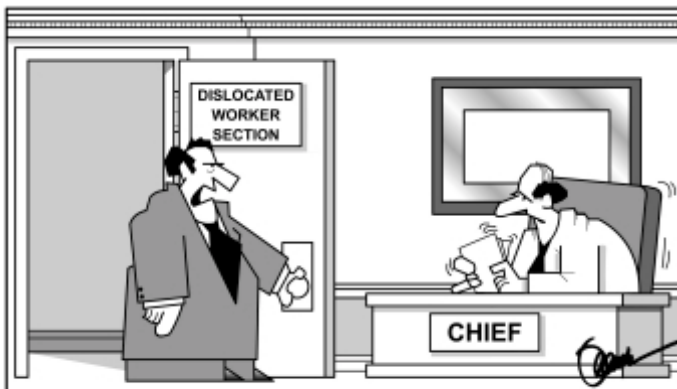
WEBSITE: <http://www.lengelvocationalservices.com>

# “One Stop Cartoons”

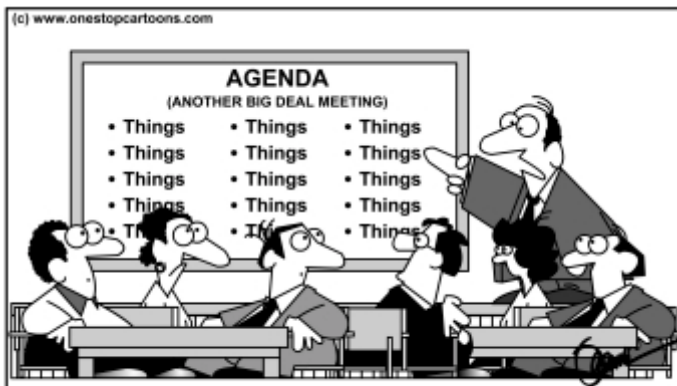
by Franko



"Dear God, please make everyone at the one-stop do what I want them to do so I can be a better co-worker today. Amen."



"Bad news, Jones! America's Job Bank just merged with First National. You're one of the customers now!"



"We have lots of things to talk about today ..."



"Wow! The boss is really getting serious about eliminating the soft exits!"



"Today you learn how the Catch of the Day is really selected."



"I don't think that's going to be enough to satisfy the building inspectors!"